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Parental Role in Encouraging Sport Participation in Females

Abstract

Although still askew compared to male rates, female participation rates in sports have gone up since the introduction of Title IX in 1972. A plethora of research has been done to identify the various factors as to why females play sport, parental influence being a common social aspect. Research is lacking, however, in exploring the types of parental influence, specifically based on the gender of the parent. By surveying students at St. John Fisher College, this study examines the support/modeling roles commonly associated with the gender of the parent in regards to influencing their children to participate in sport. Results show that although there are certain support roles that still tend to be the mother's responsibility as in the past, unexpected results indicate there is a shift from previous research, with both parents sharing certain support/modeling roles equally when a nuclear parent household is present. Ultimately, however, the paternal influence was reported as still being the biggest influence in the participant's entry into athletics.

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Parental Role in Encouraging Sport Participation in Females

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Abstract

Although still askew compared to male rates, female participation rates in sports have gone up since the introduction of Title IX in 1972. A plethora of research has been done to identify the various factors as to why females play sport, parental influence being a common social aspect. Research is lacking, however, in exploring the types of parental influence, specifically based on the gender of the parent. By surveying students at St. John Fisher College, this study examines the support/modeling roles commonly associated with the gender of the parent in regards to influencing their children to participate in sport. Results show that although there are certain support roles that still tend to be the mother's responsibility as in the past, unexpected results indicate there is a shift from previous research, with both parents sharing certain support/modeling roles equally when a nuclear parent household is present. Ultimately, however, the paternal influence was reported as still being the biggest influence in the participant's entry into athletics.

Parental Role in Encouraging Sport Participation in Females

It is a known fact that in the past four decades, girls have had more access to athletics in the high school as well as collegiate levels than before the creation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments (Bell, 2007). Despite these relatively recent advancements, there is still much work to be done in order to obtain true equality between male and female athletes. The work necessary to further improve these numbers and bring women in sport to a level comparable to men cannot begin until the reasons are known as to why the disparity still exists. If Title IX is essentially succeeding in what it was intended, yet there is still an imbalance, it is then advantageous to look elsewhere for a cause.

The current opportunities that are granted to women today are (arguably) endless in regards to government mandating equal opportunities in educational institutions. So the question of why the continued disparity between men and women's participation in sport still exists needs to be examined intently in order to move closer to equality. Among others, parental influence is an aspect that should be delved into as a potential factor in encouraging more females to participate in sport. Parents are often labeled as the most important role model in their child's lives in various facets of growing up. Therefore, their influence (or lack thereof) on their sons and daughters participation in sport, either directly or indirectly, should be examined in depth as a probable cause for the continued disparity. Specifically, addressing the roles each parent plays in impacting the female's initial interest in athletics. Past research has shown that the maternal role model is likely to influence daughters more often than their male counterparts in certain aspects of life, just as the paternal role model is more apt to influence their sons (Cohen, 1993). But, whether or not this is the case in regards to participation in sport is something that needs to be further researched. Men have historically

been the dominant figures in sports. The world of recreational and competitive athletics is no exception. Generation X, the first generation of women to benefiting from Title IX, are now raising families of their own. It can be expected that they may pass on their experiences and encourage their daughters to participate in athletics.

Literature Review

Sport has traditionally been regarded as primarily a male territory (Lensky, 1990). Organized sports have long been an integral part of the American high school experience for boys. However, the same has not been historically true for girls (Stevenson, 2007). Even in today's society, although significantly growing since the inception of Title IX, female participation rates in both high school and collegiate sports are still well below rates of their gender counterpart. In the 2010-2011 High School Athletic Participation Survey, total sport participation across the country for males was nearly 4.5 million, while the female participation number was just over 3 million (National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2011). Similarly, the NCAA reported that in their 2010-2011 academic years, there were 256,344 males in collegiate athletics, while female participates totaled 193,232 (NCAA, 2011). Past research has been done to explore the reasons for this continued unbalance. In order to research the phenomenon, the long history of the perceptions about female inferiority and weakness need to be addressed.

Historical Perceptions of Women's Abilities

Before 1972, women weren't given many opportunities to participate in sport. The reasons for their exclusion, as illogical as they seem today, were justified two centuries ago. The dominant physiological belief of the nineteenth century held that each human being possessed a fixed amount of energy, and to use this for physical and intellectual tasks at the

same time could be hazardous (Park & Hult, 1993). Women were, at that time, known to have much less energy than a man, and therefore should not be exerting what little they had playing a sport. Medical research from this time period, now known to be invalid, also suggested that exertion of energy could be unhealthy for a woman, particularly in regards to her reproductive organs. "Manipulating science to reinforce established dogma prevailed for many years in spite of repeated examples of women who were perfectly capable of performing physical feats and intellectual tasks" (Bell, 2007, p. 2). Apocryphal medical research continued to hinder opportunities for women to participate in sport despite the contradictory evidence that they were plenty able.

The relatively few women who went to college at the turn of the century were also given few opportunities to play sport. If activity was apparent, it was in the form of intramurals, club sports or sorority matches (Bell, 2007). In fact, only 30% of the colleges surveyed by 1936 had different forms of sport participation for women other than the ones just mentioned (Hultstrand, 1993). Although basketball was introduced in the late 1800's as the first intercollegiate sport for women, the rules of the game were changed to ensure exertion and physical play was kept at a minimum as well as to shift the focus from competition to teamwork and cooperation. Senda Berenson, a physical education teacher at Smith College in Northampton, Connecticut, created the rules for women which differ from the rules established by the YMCA for men's basketball. Augusta Lane Patrick, who at the time was the Director of Physical Training of Newark, New Jersey high schools wrote about how she observed how exhausted the girls were that came off the court from what she attributed to the excitement of the game as well the loss of energy from confused and purposeless movements (Berenson, 1905). Patrick, who feared permanent weakness because of excessive labor, felt rule changes

need to be made for women's basketball. The game was shortened by at least five minutes each half, and each player was limited to a certain territory, so that the "severe strain [on the woman] is alleviated" (Berenson, 1905, p. 49). The roughness of the game was also greatly eliminated by added a rule in which it was forbidden to touching the ball while in another player's hands. This rule was said to "train to an almost wonderful degree the power of inhibition, and in conjunction with the one on "holding" which develops speed and quickness, strengthens mental qualities highly desirable" (Berenson, 1905, p. 49). Other rule changes included no guarding over the body of the opponent who had the ball, a 3 second maximum to hold onto the ball, and only 3 dribbles per player before the ball had to be passed (Bulger, 1982). Berenson, Patrick and other women of their time felt the rule changes increased the number of women and girl's interest in playing basketball, and in essence created a love for healthy sport. Although the mentality in regards to women's abilities and the ultimate rules changes to basketball to offset these abilities(or lack thereof) sound preposterous in current day, the increase in interest of being involved in basketball was the catalyst for other women's sports to gain participation, such as tennis, field hockey, rowing and track and field (Bulger, 1982). Basketball led the way in opening the door for girls and women to partake in athletics.

Addressing the Participation Imbalance

Opportunities for women to play sports slowly increased throughout the 20th century, thanks mostly to the passing of Title IX of the Educational Amendments in 1972. The law mandates that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (The Education Amendments of 1972, 1972). Despite many problems regarding implementation and

governance, female high school athletes have increased 940% as of the 2005-06 school year since its passing in 1972 (High School Athletic Participation Survey, 2005-2006). College female participation in sport also grew. In the 1971-72 academic years, there were 29,972 female Varsity NCAA athletes. That number increased 456%, to 166,728 female athletes in 2004-05 (NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report, 2006).

Generation X females (1961-1981) were the first to benefit from the passing of this law (Strauss & Howe, 1992). These same girls who had more opportunities back three decades ago now have daughters who are also benefiting from Title IX. However there are still obstacles facing women today and the battle for equality has not been won yet. For one, past research has proven that the stigma of certain sports has deterred women from participating in them, and quite possibly in sport overall. Sports labeled as feminine seem to be those sports that allow women participants to remain true to the stereotyped expectations of femininity (such as being graceful and nonaggressive) and that provide for beauty and aesthetic pleasure (Koivula, 2001). Females are also socialized to use their bodies to please others, and value themselves based on their passive ornamental qualities through the masculine eyes of others, and to compare their appearance with that of the dominant feminine ideal (Koivula, 2001). Tiggemann (2010) found that adolescent girls, when asked why they do not participate as much as boys, stated among others that they felt like they were crossing traditional gender boundaries when playing sport, particularly for sports traditionally classified as masculine. They also talked about their appearance and image while playing as a factor as well (Tiggemann, 2010).

Another reason for the imbalance is the lack of equality, financially and in opportunity, for females. Despite the creation and implementation of Title IX, women are consistently

awarded fewer scholarship dollars, are afforded fewer teams. Likewise, the overall athletic budgets for females across the country are far less than their male counterparts (Education & Title IX: The Foundation for Equality, n.d.). Scholarship money continues year after year to be awarded to male athletes over women. In fact, males are given over \$136 million more each year than females in NCAA athletic scholarships despite Title IX prohibiting such discrepancies. The Three-Part test issued by the US Department of Education has loopholes that educational institutions frequently use to avoid being deemed in violation; in essence these loopholes allow them to continue limiting females' opportunities. The Three-Part test involves the following points:

1. Are participation opportunities substantially proportionate to enrollment?
2. Is there a history and continuing practice of program expansion for the underrepresented sex?
3. Is the institution fully and effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex? (Kennedy, 2010).

The problem with these, specifically with the second and third point, is that they are open for individual interpretations. Additionally because an education institution has to be in compliance with just one of the three "prongs", this develops gaps universities use to stay in compliance while in fact being very far from it. For instance, although in 2005-2006 women represented over 50% of the college student population nationwide, they represented only 42% of college athletes (Title IX info, 2012). Among Division I schools in 2000, spending on men's athletics was nearly double what was spent on women's sports (Education & Title IX: The Foundation for Equality, 2012). In Division I, with again women being the majority of the student body, they receive just over 30% of athletic recruiting dollars and 37% of the total money spent on

athletics (Title IX info, 2012). These obvious inequities are attributed to the lack of specificity in regards to the Three-Part Test. In 2005, for example, the Commission on Opportunity in Athletics, which was formed by the Department of Education to consider changes to Title IX because of complaints it creates reverse discrimination, issued an “Additional Clarification of its athletic policies, which permit colleges and high schools to use email surveys as a measure of girls’ and women’s interest in sport” (Kennedy, 2010, p. 79). This would enable a college or university, by sending out a blanket email to all women at their institution, knowing full well the general ineffectiveness of this type of data collection, to say they are in compliance of part three of the Three-Part Test.

Many steps need to be taken, including reviews of current legislation and stricter enforcement of the laws associated with equal opportunity by current governing agencies, to ensure any and all females who want to participate in sport have the means to do so. But how can society in general convince more females to participate in the first place? To answer that question, one first should understand the parameters involved in a females initial interest in sport as a child.

Influences on Women in Sport

Research has confirmed an assortment of benefits associated with participating in sports, including but not limited to health and social improvements. The risk of inactivity, psychological benefits and physical appearance are all factors on why female college students participate in sport (Bell, 2007). Physical activity can reduce a woman’s developing osteoporosis, breast cancer and other health problems (Teegarden et al., 1996; Bernstein et al., 1994). Participation in a sport can increase self-esteem and lower depression levels and is

associated with reduced rates of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Tiggemann, 2001).

But what attracts females to sport at a young age?

While the benefits listed are reasons that females likely continued participation in sport, these were not likely deciding factors for their initial interest in athletics as a child. To address female's primary reasons for wanting to participate in a sport, social influences must be looked at. Yang, Telama and Laasko (1996) found in their research that fathers' physical activity in 1980 was related to their children's habitual physical activity, both male and female, but more recent studies have shown this trend could be shifting. In a study conducted by Shakib and Dunbar (2004), girls were twice as likely as boys to report their mothers having participated in sports (64% versus 32%). The authors of that study continue to acknowledge that this finding supports prior research done by Cohen (1993) that reports a positive association between the sex of the role model and sports participation. Therefore, relative to the boys, it might have been more important for the girls to have mothers who also participated in sport (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004).

Davidson, Cutting and Birch (2003) conducted a study that surveyed the parents' role in predicting girl's physical activity. This research examined parents' activity-related parenting strategies and similarities and differences in such strategies for mothers and fathers as well as links between activity-related parenting strategies and girls' physical activity patterns (Davidson et al., 2003). By surveying parents of 180 9-year-old girls, they found that when at least one parent reported high levels of support, their daughters were more likely to be physically active. "Mothers reported significantly higher levels of logistic support than fathers, whereas fathers reported higher levels of explicit modeling than mothers" (Davidson et al., 2003, p. 1589). This research demonstrates that although Title IX has made much advancement for women in

athletics, fathers still tend to be the parent that females model their athletic interests after, because of their father's enjoyment and frequency of physical activity, while mothers take on the support role, which involves enrolling daughters in sports, driving to and from events, and overall support and encouragement of the female.

Application of Identity and Social Identity Theory

"Identity theory and social identity theory are two perspectives on the social basis of the self-concept and on the nature of normative behavior" (Hogg, et al. 1995., p. 255). While social identity views a group as the basis for identity (who one is) held by social identity theory, identity theory views the individual's role as a basis for identity (what one does) held by identity theory (Thoits, 1983). "It has been suggested that being and doing are both central features of one's identity" (Stets & Burke, 2000). Both identity and social identity theories can be applied to athletics and those who participate.

Identity theory suggests individuals will base their actions on how they like to see themselves and how they like to be seen by others. It is rooted in the concept of roles and role-identities (Jacobson, 2003). "Identity theory explains social behavior in terms of the reciprocal relations between self and society" (Hogg, et al., p. 256). This theory is quite evident in sport. Take a young male who grew up in a town heavily engrossed in the sport of football as an example. Because of this upbringing, his self-concept of the ideal man might be tall, strong, active, healthy and athletic and so in order to be that ideal man he must emulate these traits. Likewise, he sees his family, friends and local community's admiration and respect for these football players, and feeds off of those social cues. This young boy might likely become a football player himself one day, not only because of his own perception of football players, but also by the stereotypes and outlooks that the society around him portrays.

Social identity theory, however, suggests that individuals will work to affix themselves to other individuals deemed similar or slightly better (Jacobson, 2003). It is said that self-conceptions are based on two parts, personal or self-identity and collective identity. Personal or self refers to our own unique personal qualities, while the collective self includes all the qualities that are formed from being a member of society, or a part of a family or culture. One of the tenants of the collective-self part of this theory is that a person prefers to identify with groups that positively enhance their self-esteem” (Gratton& Jones, 2010, p. 79). This theory is heavily researched as being one of the motives for people participating in team sports. Social identity is a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership. Being a part of a team can increase self-esteem and the feeling of belonging. Similarly, it can produce a greater self-image by praising one’s own group, and putting others down. That sense of unity and acceptance into a particular social group, such as that of a sports team, is ultimately what social identity theory suggests.

“Although differences exist between the two theories, they are more differences in emphasis than in kind, and that linking the two theories can establish a more fully integrated view of the self” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224). By applying both identity theory and social identity theory to this research, an attempt will be made understand why parental influences affect female’s participation in sport, as well as predict future outcomes using these same theories.

Simply put, there is a need for more research exploring a potential shift in the modeling influence from the father to the mother on the daughter. One can predict that because the age of Generation X, the first generation that benefited from greater equal opportunities, and the extreme increase in female’s who participated in sport during this time frame, that daughters

would increase their tendency to model their athletic interests on the maternal parent. By shifting focus from the parent's perceptions to their college-aged athletic daughters, research can demonstrate a better understanding of whether or not the increase in female athletes the past 30 years is in fact encouraging future generations of females to want to participate in athletics and ultimately continue the upward trend of women in sport. Ultimately, the research questions that will be addressed are as follows:

1. Are the support/model roles specifically related to the gender of the parent still as evident today as they've been in past research?
2. Is there a shift in who college-aged men and women feel was their biggest influence in their initial interest in sport?

Method

Participants

The population for this study included college students attending St. John Fisher College. The survey was emailed to all 2891 current undergraduate and graduate students, both male and female, with a response rate of 9.9%. 178 students or 70% of those who responded to the survey were female.

Data Collection Instrument

A survey was generated via Qualtrics software and consisted of 12 questions broken down into 3 sections (See Appendix B). Section 1 asked about sport participation of self and parents. After the initial question about the individuals participation in sport, which helped exclude the non-athletes from continuing the survey as their data was not needed in this research, the individuals answered mom, dad, both or neither to questions involving their

parents athletic career. This information is considered important because it shows the cyclical pattern of generations encouraging generations, which is ultimately what the basis of this study relies on. The hope is that as more women are receiving greater opportunities in sport, they will lead a life full of participating in them and one day encourage young girls to do the same

The second section included questions that focused in on the specific parental roles. By using both the supportive and modeling factors that Davidson, et al. (2003) defined and categorized in his research, questions were created to see whether or not past results were still evident today (See Appendix A). The answers to these 6 questions that break down the parental roles into enrolling, encouraging, transporting and watching, (all supportive), playing (modeling) and overall biggest influence, this section should help to obtain a sense of whether or not the increase in opportunities for women over the past 40 years have shifted the trend away from men being the dominant modeling and overall greatest influence in their child's participation in organized sport and towards a more equal share of all roles, regardless of the gender of the parent.

The final section of the survey tackled a few specific demographic questions, including gender and household situation. It's important in this study to understand the structure in the home. For example, if a student taking the survey did not have a key parental influence as a child, it could skew the data. In other words, it is imperative to know that there were both maternal and paternal influences in the student's life in order to use their survey outcomes in the result section of the research. With divorce a commonality in today's society, it seems that whether or not the participants surveyed have divorced parents is irrelevant. What is important however is whether or not there has been a stable male in the paternal role as well as a stable female taking on the maternal role. The wording of the household question

ensures that students who have been adopted, as well as those who have step-parents who have filled a role of an absent biological parent still fit the “both parent” household, and their results can be added and analyzed as a nuclear parent household.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect the desired data for this study, an email list of all St. John Fisher 2011-2012 enrolled students, both full and part time, was acquired. After the review and approval process of the survey by the current professor overseeing the research, it was distributed to the stated participants along with a cover letter which briefly discussed the reasoning behind the survey, as well as the anticipated timeline of completion (See Appendix C). The cover letter also addressed the consent and confidentiality issues, to ensure the students’ privacy is not at risk. After the initial 3-week time period, a reminder email went out to all students who had not taken the survey, politely reminding them of the impending deadline and encouraging them to help with the research. Once the overall 4-week period for data collection was over, the survey was closed, and data analysis began.

Data Analysis Procedure

Results obtained via the survey were analyzed using SPSS software using three main statistical analysis options; Frequency, Cross Tabulations and Chi-Squared. The frequency of mothers being a greater influence on their daughters as well as their sons was calculated; likewise for the father. The correlation of mothers and fathers to which type of influence (support v. model) was also analyzed closely. Whether or not there is a significant difference in the parental roles and who the children felt was the greater influence was the main interest as the data was analyzed using Chi-Squared analysis.

Results

Household Demographics

When the students who completed the survey were asked about their household situation growing up, which is considered a crucial aspect of this research, 83% were raised in a nuclear parent household, consisting of 2 adult parental figures. Most of the remaining respondents, 13.4% were raised in a single mother household with the final 3.6% having lived with a single dad or extended family.

Sport Participation

Looking at the questions regarding the student's athletic participation history asked in the survey, 10.9% (31 respondents) did not participate in sports at any level. These student's responses were discarded before that data was analyzed, ensuring accurate results in regards to influences in participation in sport. Of the individuals whose data was included in the analysis, 7% played organized sport as a child only, 46% (the majority) played up to and including high school and the remaining 12% continued their athletic career into college as well. Delving into the research a bit further, data shows that 12% of all respondents that stated they had been involved in some level of organized sport answered that neither their father nor their mother participated in sport at some level in their lives.

When asked about the surveyee's parent's athletic participation history, the data showed that the students chose both parents as having played sports as adolescents most frequently, with nearly 44% of the responses. 27.4% indicated that only their father participated as a child, 13.3% responded that neither their mother nor father participated when they were growing up, and only 4.6% of the finished surveys indicated that only their mom played sports in their childhood.

Continuing the questions regarding the parent's history in sport, the next inquired about the parental figures playing in some type of organized sport while the surveyee grew up. Over half the students that completed the survey specified that neither parent played during that time period. 53 respondents (18.6%) answered that their father continued to participate in athletics during their offspring's adolescence, but only 4.6% of their mothers did. 6.7%, or 19 responses claimed that both parents still played sports while their child(ren) were growing up.

The last question regarding the parental figures participation in sport asked if they still currently play some sort of organized sport. An overwhelming 75.4% said that neither parent participates in sport today. 25 students or 8.8% responded that their fathers do still play a sport, while only 7 said that their mom still participates, and the remaining 7 respondents, or 2.5% of those surveyed said that both parents still participate in athletics.

Parental Roles

When exploring the inferential statistics, results were analyzed via cross tabulations and Pearson's chi-squared test, in order to expose relationships as well as any significant differences between the responses given. The significant relationships were found using two-tailed probability ($p < .005$). When examining the question that asked which parent typically enrolled the respondent in sports (a support role), the findings showed that there was a significant difference in what the males answered versus what the females said ($p < .001$). Although both the men and women answered most frequently that both parents equally took on the responsibility of the enrollment, some men believed their fathers enrolled them in more frequently than their mothers, and some women felt that their mothers were more often responsible for enrolling them into sports than their fathers. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the genders and that it is significant because it may, at least in

part, be contributed to well-documented research which suggests that same-sex parents typically have a greater influence on children (See Appendix D).

Another question involving a support role asked who typically encouraged the respondent to participate in sport. Both females and males felt, again, that both their mother and father equally took on the role of encouraging. Unlike the previous question about enrollment however, this data has no significance ($p=.173$). A selection of women and men surveyed believed that their fathers held the role of encouraging more so than their mothers. In fact, out of the 39 female respondents who did not choose both equally as their answer, 43% felt that their dad played more of the encouraging role than their mom. 53% of the men who did not choose both equally chose their dad as who they felt owned this support role while growing up. This data does not support the hypothesis that as the participation numbers of females in sport increase, so should their roles in influencing participation in their children, especially daughters (See Appendix E).

When analyzing the data from the two other questions regarding support, who transported and who watched, there was no sign of any significant relationships either. In regards to the transportation question included in the survey, both males and females dominantly chose "both equally" as their choice (76 out of 144 women (52.8%) and 25 out of 64 men (39.1%)). Likewise, the next answer most frequently chosen was "mostly mom" by both genders as well, with 38.9% of the women and 34.4% of the men (See Appendix F). Again, these outcomes do not support the hypothesis of this research study, because both genders leaned towards one parent claiming the role, rather than the belief and hope that the gender of the parent directly relates to the influence on the same gendered offspring.

When examining the question asking which parent typically watched, the findings were very similar to that of the transported and encouraged questions that preceded this one. There is no significant difference as both men and women, answered that both parents equally watched their sporting events (See Appendix G).

Another question that did not seem to support the hypothesis of this study asked who the respondent felt played sports with them more frequently. Gender was irrelevant, as the father figure was chosen most by both males and females. 45 men out of the 64 (70.3%) who responded chose the father as being the parental figure who played with them more often. And although the female responses were slightly less heavy indicating the father played with them more (54.8%, or 80 respondents), it was evident that both genders still view fathers as the primary parent in regards to the modeling roles (See Appendix H).

When examining the results from the last question which asked those surveyed who they felt their biggest influence was in regards to participating in sport, a significant relationship was found. Over 50% of males who completed the survey answered that their fathers were their biggest influence in regards to participation in organized athletics. While this isn't a surprise, the fact that only 18.5% of women answered that their mothers were their greatest influence is. Again, the hopes of this study was to show a shift in influence on females in sport with the 4 decades of Title IX granting women more opportunities. By analyzing this question, it does not seem that women in older generations are influencing the women in younger generations as much as was hoped. There is, however, much positive data to show there has definitely been progress.

Discussion

After analysis of all data collected was complete, several interesting observations became clear. First, when looking at the percentage of respondents who played a sport in some level of their lives thus far, we see that only a very few (10.9%) have never played organized sport. This is encouraging in that the majority of our youth participate in sport at some point. However, it's also troubling because very few continue their sport participation as they become adults. Further research should be done to look at the cause of these numbers declining as age increases, in hopes to try and change that pattern. By looking at the data gathered regarding parents participation during certain aspects of their life, it's apparent that it steadily declines. While 43.9% of respondents said that both of their parents played sports when they were children, only 6.7% of them said that both parents still played after having children. Less than 3% of both the mothers and fathers of those surveyed still play organized sport today. Fathers participated in sport more than mothers as the time past, which could likely be contributed to the female's roles as a mother and care-taker. These typical roles women have held for generations along with the addition of the relatively new role of working a full time job, leaves little spare time for the females to be able to participate in organized sport, even if desired. Further research should be done to understand, in depth, the statistic that as men and women get older, they are less likely to play a sport. By finding the reasons for the decline, it could help create ways to stop this trend, which could ultimately create a healthier, more active society in general.

Another observation that was made while analyzing the data obtained was the shift, or in some cases, lack thereof, of support and model roles of parents. In past research, as stated before, although typically the gender of the parental role model directly relates to the gender of the child, in the area of athletics, this did not typically hold true. However, this study does

indeed show some positive shifts in the roles each parent plays. For example, the majority of questions involving specific roles were answered “both equally” by both the males and females who took the study. This proves that there has been progress made since Davidson, Cutting and Birch (2000) conducted their research. While in the past the mothers tended to take the support roles, this research shows that isn’t the case anymore. With the increase of women in the workforce, obtaining careers and working as many hours if not more than the male in the household, it seems as though the fathers have had to help or take over these support roles historically held by women.

The modeling roles however, still seem to be dominated by the father figure. With both the modeling question regarding playing sports with their children, as well as the question regarding the overall biggest influence, it’s obvious that women have not yet made a substantial leap in regards to being a sport role model. Again, in order to understand why this is, more research needs to be done on why women don’t typically continue to play sports as they grow older and start a family. If Title IX is indeed succeeding in obtaining the results it was created to obtain, which is creating more opportunities for women in sport, then the focus needs to be put on why these women who at one time took advantage of these new found opportunities are gradually dropping out of athletics all together.

According to the Women’s Sports Foundation, by the age of 14, girls are twice as likely to drop out of sports as boys (CITE). This research could be very significant in that it could create a snowball effect in regards to active lifestyles and in turn a healthier society. By working on creating more opportunities for females in sport as well as ensuring Title IX is working to help create equality and encouraging all children and adolescents to participate in sport, regardless of their gender, eventually these same men and women will be parents of

their own children, who will then, just as the social identity theory suggests influence their offspring to participate in sport. Generation after generation will continue to influence creating a larger population of healthy, active people who participate in sport.

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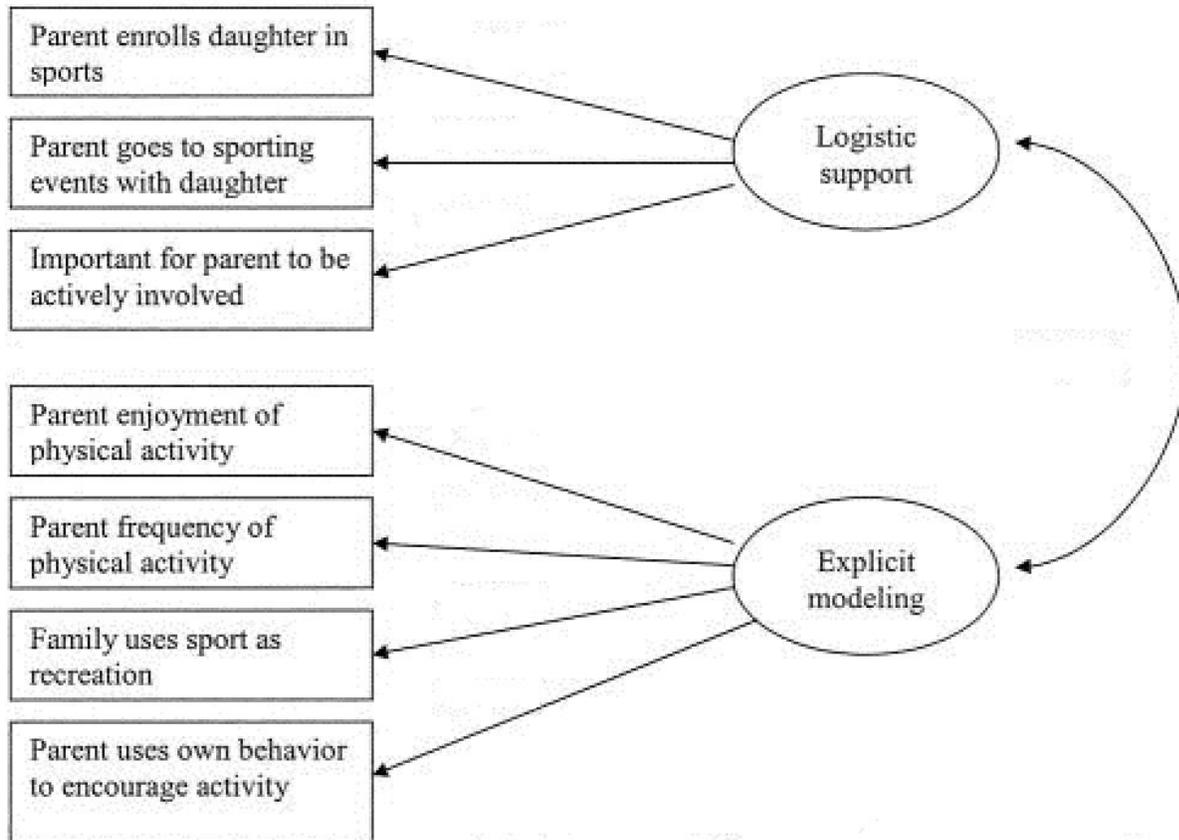
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Appendix A.

Activity-Related Parenting Practices



Appendix B.

Survey Instrument: Parental Influences in Sport

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. This monumental piece of legislation helped to create more opportunities for women in many areas, including sport. Although the participation rates of women in sport have dramatically increased since Title IX's inception, sport today is still dominated by males. This survey will attempt to further understand each parent's specific roles in influencing their child's participation in sport and whether or not these roles are directly related to the child's gender. Thank you for

choosing to participate in this survey. We value your honest feedback. The survey will take approx. 5 minutes and will be completely anonymous. Please click the ">>" button to begin

Which of the following best describes you?

- Played organized sports as a child only (1)
- Played sports up to and including high school (2)
- Played sports up to and including college (3)
- Did not play sports (4)

If Did not play sports Is Selected, Then Skip To The focus of this survey was for peop...

Did your parents play organized sports while they were growing up?

- Mom (1)
- Dad (2)
- Both (3)
- Neither (4)

Did your parents play organized sports while you were growing up?

- Mom (1)
- Dad (2)
- Both (3)
- Neither (4)

Do your parents still play organized sports?

- Mom (1)
- Dad (2)
- Both (3)
- Neither (4)

Who typically enrolled you in sports as a child/adolescent?

- Mostly Mom (1)
- Mostly Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

Who typically encouraged you to participate in sports as a child/adolescent?

- Mostly Mom (1)
- Mostly Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

Who typically transported you to and from your sporting events as a child/adolescent?

- Mostly Mom (1)
- Mostly Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

Who typically watched you play sports as a child/adolescent?

- Mostly Mom (1)
- Mostly Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

Who typically played sports with you as a child/adolescent?

- Mostly Mom (1)
- Mostly Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

All things considered, who do you feel was your biggest influence to participate in sports as a child/adolescent?

- Mom (1)
- Dad (2)
- Both equally (3)
- Neither/Other (4)

Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Household Situation - How would you classify the majority of your adolescent years?

- Both parents (Biological or Step Parents) (1)
- Single Mom (2)
- Single Dad (3)
- Live with extended family (4)

Answer If Which of the following best describes you? Did not play sports Is Selected

Because this survey is specifically addressing roles of parents whose children have participated in organized sport, we will need no further information from you at this point. Thank you very much for your time. Please click the ">>" button to end the survey.

Appendix C.

Survey Introduction Email

Dear St. John Fisher Student,

As some of you may know, this year marks the 40th anniversary of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. This monumental piece of legislation helped to create more opportunities for women in many areas, including sport. Although the participation rates of women in sport have dramatically increased since Title IX's inception, sport today is still dominated by males. I have chosen to try and further understand this discrepancy for my senior thesis by focusing on parental influences in sport, specifically the role each parent plays in their child(ren)'s athletic endeavors. The linked survey below will ask questions regarding your individual influences in regards to organized athletics. As a member of the St. John Fisher community, your completion will be of great importance in my research. The survey is 100% anonymous and will take about 5 minutes to complete.

There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with completing the survey. You may refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw from completing the survey at any time. By completing the survey, you consent to participate. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses in any published and reported results of this study.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact

either me at jlb08105@sjfc.edu or my supervising instructor, Dr. Dane by email at edane@sjfc.edu.

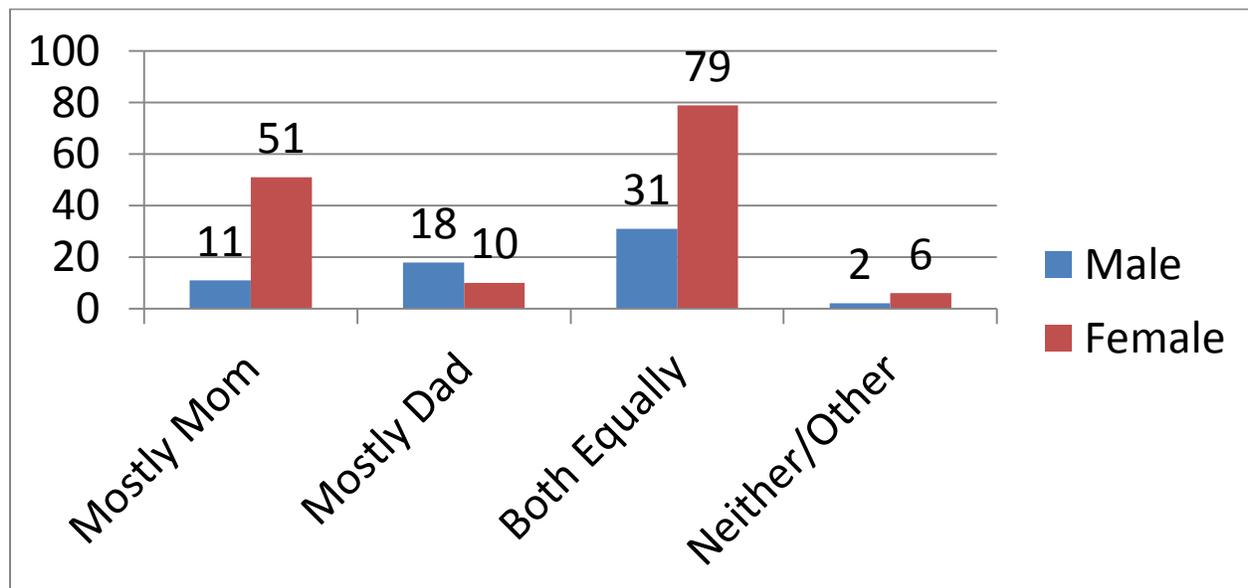
It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the survey by Saturday, June 30th. Feel free to contact either Dr. Dane or myself with any questions. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jaime Berthold
 St. John Fisher College
 Sport Management

Appendix D.

Enrolled:



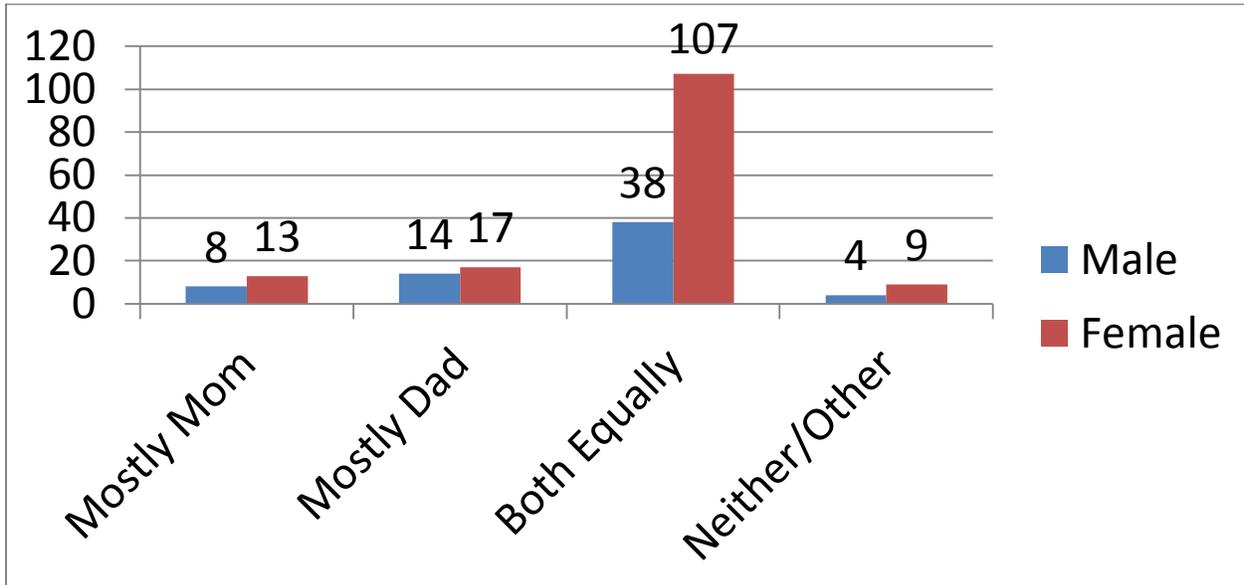
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.018 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	18.973	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.878	1	.349
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.44.

Appendix E.

Encouraged:



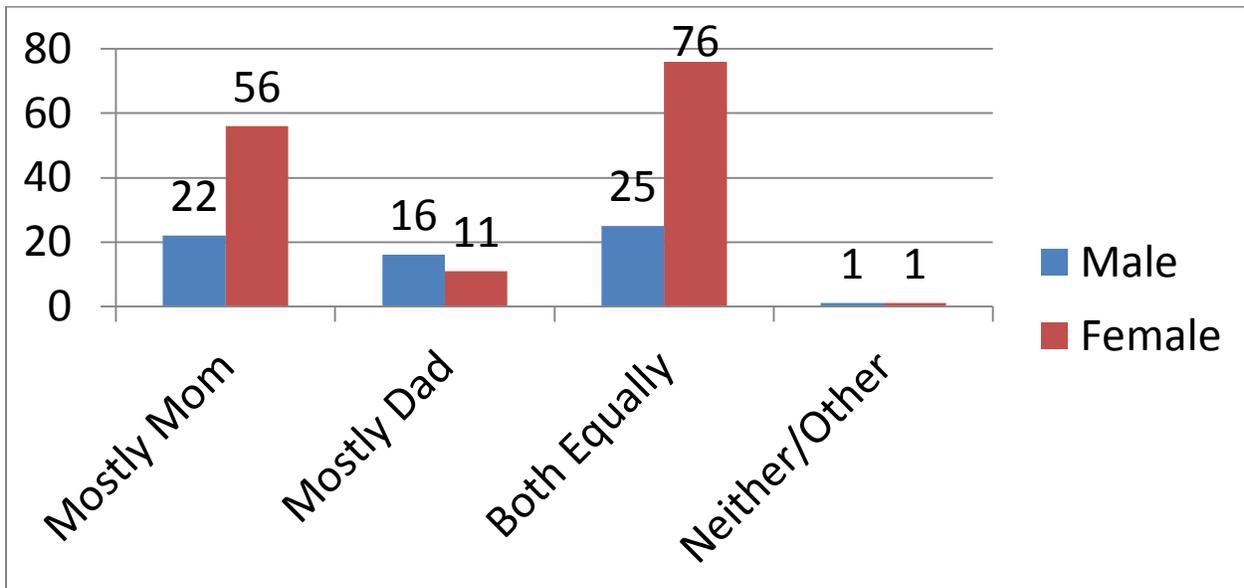
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.978 ^a	3	.173
Likelihood Ratio	4.781	3	.189
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.522	1	.112
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.96.

Appendix F.

Transported:



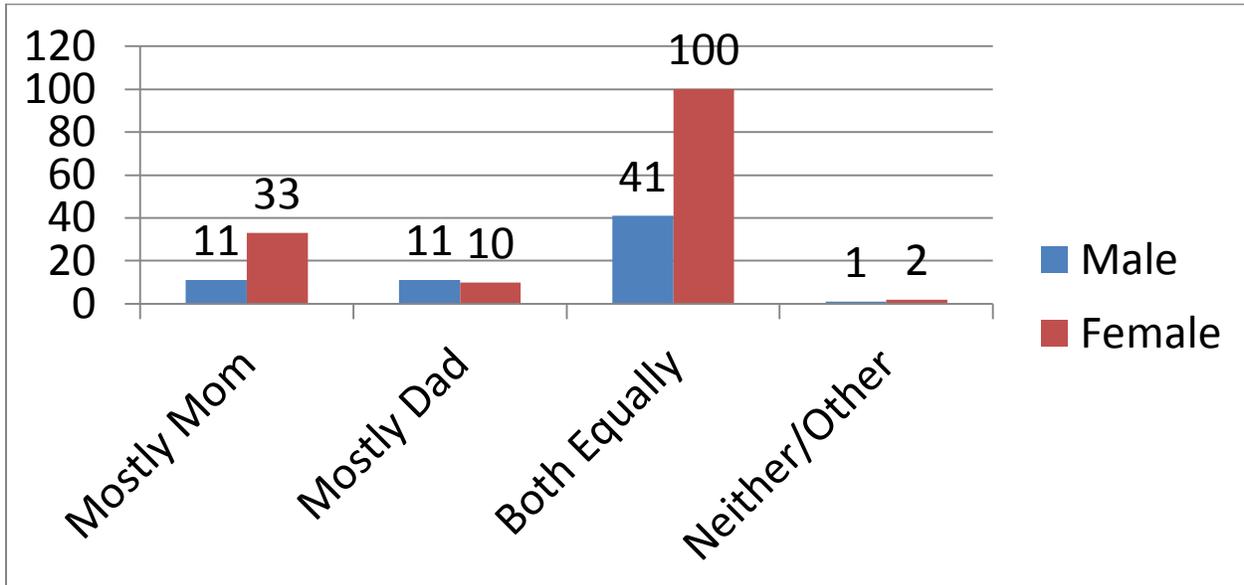
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.592 ^a	3	.006
Likelihood Ratio	11.661	3	.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	.279	1	.598
N of Valid Cases	208		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .62.

Appendix G.

Watched:



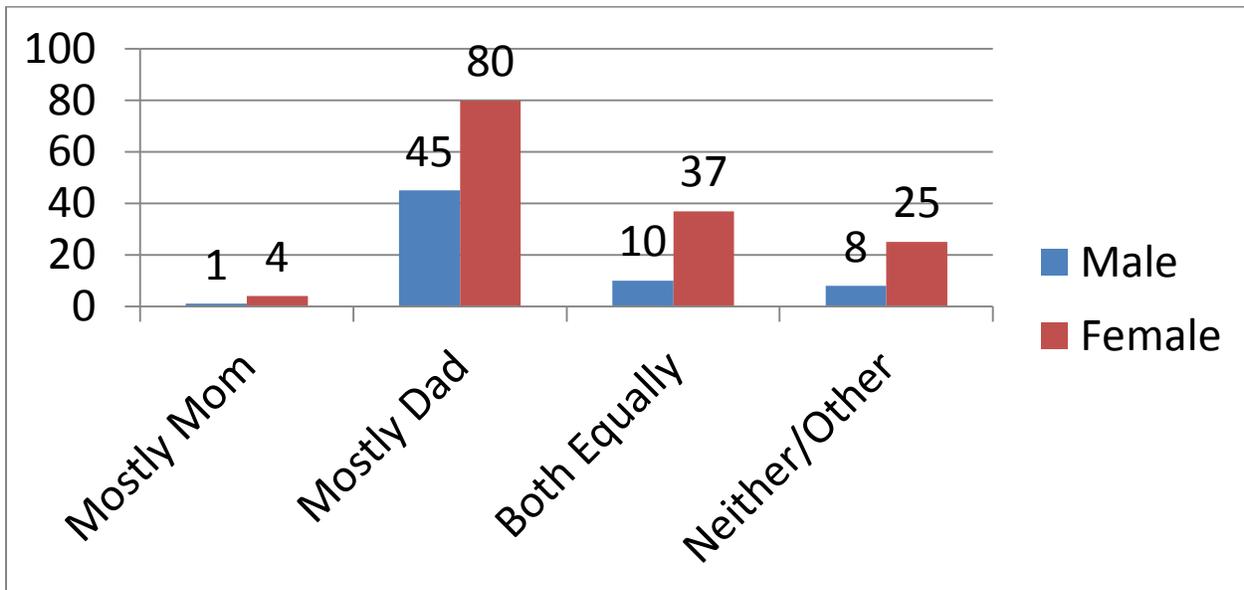
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.503 ^a	3	.138
Likelihood Ratio	5.133	3	.162
Linear-by-Linear Association	.007	1	.934
N of Valid Cases	209		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .92.

Appendix H.

Played sports with:



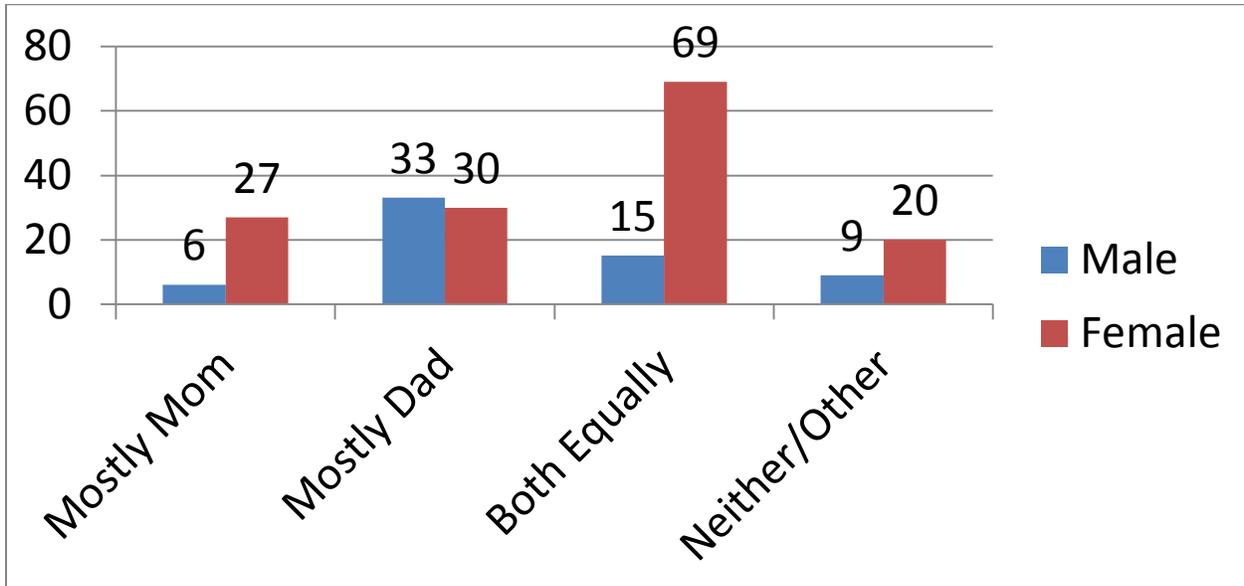
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.542 ^a	3	.209
Likelihood Ratio	4.668	3	.198
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.290	1	.130
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.52.

Appendix I.

Biggest influence:



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.070 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	22.608	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.920	1	.337
N of Valid Cases	209		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.74.